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Attorney's Docket No. 97-0912
Client's Docket No.BLT317

68904 U.S. PTO 08/14/97

PATENT Utility APPLICATION COVER SHEET

BOX PATENT APPLICATION
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Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the utility patent application of:

INVENTOR: CLAUDE D DAVIS, SR.
DOUGLAS M EDSALL

FOR: INFLATABLE LIFE VEST

Enclosed are:

X Postcard for receipt stamp and return.
X Applicant's Check for **$385.00**, covering fees calculated below.
X Specification with Claims, Abstract, & Declaration & Power of Attorney
X A verified statement to establish small entity status under 37C.F.R § 1.9 and 37 C.F.R. § 1.27.
X __2_____sheets of drawing.
☐ Cover Sheet & Assignment to:_____
☐ Information Disclosure Statement.

The filing fee has been calculated as shown below:

FOR:	(Col. 1) No. Filed	(Col. 2) No. Extra		SMALL ENTITY RATE	FEE
BASIC FEE				$385	**$385**
TOTAL CLAIMS	**10** -20=	**0**	x11		**0**
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS	**3** - 3=	**0**	x40		**0**
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIMS PRESENTED			+125		
		TOTAL			**$385**

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees, which are not otherwise submitted and which may be required under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17 during the entire pendency of this application, to the Deposit Account # **11-0020**. Three copies of this sheet are enclosed.

August 14, 1997
Date

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Attorney's Docket No. 97-0912
Client's Docket No. BLT317

In the United States Patent and Trademark Office

In re Application of:
CLAUDE D DAVIS, SR.
DOUGLAS M EDSALL

Filed: **UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION**

For: INFLATABLE LIFE VEST

Assistant Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

Date of Deposit: August 14, 1997

I hereby certify that the attached U.S. Patent Application, informal drawings, transmittal letter, priority document, and/or Preliminary Amendment are being deposited with the United States Postal Service under Express Mail service **#EM 323365625 US** on the date indicated above and is addressed to the Box Patent Application, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

August 14, 1997
Date

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Attorney's Docket No. K&A 97-0912
Client's Docket No. BLT317

APPLICATION

FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

SPECIFICATION

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BE IT KNOWN THAT WE, **CLAUDE D. DAVIS, SR.**, a citizen of UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, and **DOUGLAS M. EDSALL**, a citizen of UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have invented a new and useful **INFLATABLE LIFE VEST** of which the following is a specification:

INFLATABLE LIFE VEST

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to life vests and more particularly pertains to a new inflatable life vest for allowing both the automatic and manual inflation of a bladder within a life vest.

Description of the Prior Art

The use of life vests is known in the prior art. More specifically, life vests heretofore devised and utilized are known to consist basically of familiar, expected and obvious structural configurations, notwithstanding the myriad of designs encompassed by the crowded prior art which have been developed for the fulfillment of countless objectives and requirements.

Known prior art life vests include U. S. Patent No. 5,338,239; U.S. Patent No. 5,035,345; U.S. Patent No. 4,246,672; U.S. Patent Des. 361,115; U.S. Patent No. 4,681,552; and U.S. Patent No. 5,311,394.

In these respects, the inflatable life vest according to the present invention substantially departs from the conventional

concepts and designs of the prior art, and in so doing provides an apparatus primarily developed for the purpose of allowing both the automatic and manual inflation of a bladder within a life vest.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In view of the foregoing disadvantages inherent in the known types of life vests now present in the prior art, the present invention provides a new inflatable life vest construction wherein the same can be utilized for allowing both the automatic and manual inflation of a bladder within a life vest.

The general purpose of the present invention, which will be described subsequently in greater detail, is to provide a new inflatable life vest apparatus and method which has many of the advantages of the life vests mentioned heretofore and many novel features that result in a new inflatable life vest which is not anticipated, rendered obvious, suggested, or even implied by any of the prior art life vests, either alone or in any combination thereof.

To attain this, the present invention generally comprises a vest constructed from a polyester mesh material. As shown in Figure 1, the vest includes a rear portion and a front portion halved by a central slit. The slit has a zipper formed thereon for allowing the selective coupling of the halves of the front portion. A lip is coupled along the central slit adjacent the zipper with a pile fastener mounted thereon. Such pile fastener serves to releasably couple to another pile fastener mounted on an opposite half of the front portion of the vest adjacent the central slit. As an option, the vest may further include a collar extending upwardly from a rear portion of a neck opening formed in the vest. Next provided is a plurality of cargo pockets coupled to a lower extent of both halves

of the front portion of the vest. Each pocket has a lid coupled along a top edge thereof with a pile fastener situated thereon. Such pile fastener is adapted for releasably coupling with another pile fastener situated on a front face of the pocket thereby allowing the selective sealing of the pocket. With reference now to Figure 3, it can be seen that an inflatable bladder is provided. The bladder has a rear portion with a generally rectangular configuration and a pair of front portions each with a generally square configuration. The front portions are coupled along rear edges thereof to the rear portion thereby defining a neck aperture. A top surface of the bladder is equipped with pile fasteners coupled thereto for releasably coupling with a plurality of pile fasteners positioned on an interior of the vest. It should be noted that the front and rear portions of the bladder reside in an upper half of the vest. Also included is an air actuation mechanism with a mounting assembly attached to the top surface of one of the front portions of the inflatable bladder and situated within the vest. The mounting assembly includes a threaded opening in communication with the inflatable bladder thereby equipped for releasably receiving a cylindrical pressurized air canister. Note Figure 4. A valve is slidably situated above the threaded opening with a pin coupled to a bottom surface thereof. Associated therewith is a spring situated between the valve and the threaded opening. During operation, the valve has a first unbiased orientation wherein the pin sits distant the threaded opening. The valve further has a second biased orientation wherein the pin resides within the threaded opening for effecting the release of air from the pressurized air canister. For controlling the orientation of the valve, the mounting assembly further includes a lever pivotally attached to the mounting assembly and adapted to transfer the valve to the second biased orientation upon the pivoting thereof. Next provided is an automatic air

actuator including a motor coupled to the mounting assembly. Eccentrically coupled to the motor is an interconnection member having an end attached to the lever. The motor is adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly upon the actuation thereof. The automatic air actuator further includes a water switch adapted to actuate the motor upon the detection of water. Also included is a manual air actuator having a pull cord with a first end coupled to the lever of the mounting assembly and a second end extending through an aperture formed in the vest. A T-shaped handle is coupled to the second end of the pull cord. By this structure, the pull cord is adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly upon the pulling thereof.

There has thus been outlined, rather broadly, the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject matter of the claims appended hereto.

In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and to the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting.

As such, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conception, upon which this disclosure is based, may readily be utilized as a basis for the designing of other structures, methods and systems for carrying out the several purposes of the present invention. It is important, therefore, that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent constructions insofar as they do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Further, the purpose of the foregoing abstract is to enable the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the public generally, and especially the scientists, engineers and practitioners in the art who are not familiar with patent or legal terms or phraseology, to determine quickly from a cursory inspection the nature an essence of the technical disclosure of the application. The abstract is neither intended to define the invention of the application, which is measured by the claims, nor is it intended to be limiting as to the scope of the invention in any way.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a new inflatable life vest apparatus and method which has many of the advantages of the life vests mentioned heretofore and many novel features that result in a new inflatable life vest which is not anticipated, rendered obvious, suggested, or even implied by any of the prior art life vests, either alone or in any combination thereof.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a new inflatable life vest which may be easily and efficiently manufactured and marketed.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a new inflatable life vest which is of a durable and reliable construction.

An even further object of the present invention is to provide a new inflatable life vest which is susceptible of a low cost of manufacture with regard to both materials and labor, and which accordingly is then susceptible of low prices of sale to the consuming public, thereby making such inflatable life vest economically available to the buying public.

Still yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new inflatable life vest which provides in the apparatuses and methods of the prior art some of the advantages thereof, while simultaneously overcoming some of the disadvantages normally associated therewith.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a new inflatable life vest for allowing both the automatic and manual inflation of a bladder within a life vest.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new inflatable life vest which includes allowing both the automatic and manual inflation of a bladder within a life vest.

Even still another object of the present invention is to provide a new inflatable life vest that includes a vest and an inflatable bladder situated therein. Next provided is an air actuation mechanism comprising a mounting assembly which includes a threaded opening in communication with the inflatable bladder. In use, the threaded opening is equipped for releasably receiving a cylindrical pressurized air canister. A valve is slidably situated above the threaded opening with a pin coupled to a bottom surface thereof. A spring is situated between the valve and the threaded opening. The valve has a first unbiased orientation wherein the pin sits distant the threaded opening and a second biased orientation

wherein the pin resides within the threaded opening for effecting the release of air from the pressurized air canister. The mounting assembly further includes a lever pivotally attached to the mounting assembly and adapted to transfer the valve to the second biased orientation upon the pivoting thereof. Further provided is an automatic and manual air actuator which are both adapted to effect the pivoting of the lever.

These together with other objects of the invention, along with the various features of novelty which characterize the invention, are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its operating advantages and the specific objects attained by its uses, reference should be made to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which there are illustrated preferred embodiments of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be better understood and objects other than those set forth above will become apparent when consideration is given to the following detailed description thereof. Such description makes reference to the annexed drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a new inflatable life vest according to the present invention.

Figure 2 is a rear view of the vest of the present invention.

Figure 3 is a top view of the inflatable bladder of the present invention.

Figure 4 is a front view of the air actuation mechanism of the present invention.

Figure 5 is a side view of the manual pump mechanism of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference now to the drawings, and in particular to Figures 1 through 5 thereof, a new inflatable life vest embodying the principles and concepts of the present invention and generally designated by the reference numeral 10 will be described.

The system designated as numeral 10 includes a vest 12 constructed from a polyester mesh material. As shown in Figure 1, the vest includes a rear portion 14 and a front portion 16 halved by a central slit 18. The slit has a zipper 20 formed thereon for allowing the selective coupling of the halves of the front portion. A lip 22 is coupled along the central slit adjacent the zipper with a pile fastener 24 mounted thereon. Such pile fastener serves to releasably couple over the zipper to another pile fastener 26 mounted on an opposite half of the front portion of the vest adjacent the central slit. As an option, the vest may further include a short collar 28 extending upwardly from a rear portion of a neck opening formed in the vest.

Next provided is a plurality of cargo pockets 30 coupled to a lower extent of both halves of the front portion of the vest. Each pocket has a lid 32 coupled along a top edge thereof with a pile fastener situated thereon. Such pile fastener is adapted for releasably coupling with another pile fastener situated on a front face of the pocket thereby allowing the selective sealing of the

pocket. In the preferred embodiment, each half of the front portion is equipped with a two vertically aligned pockets.

With reference now to Figure 3, it can be seen that an inflatable bladder 34 is provided. The bladder has a rear portion 36 with a generally rectangular configuration and a pair of front portions 38 each with a generally square configuration. The front portions are coupled along rear edges thereof to the rear portion thereby defining a neck aperture 40. A top surface of the bladder is equipped with pile fasteners coupled thereto for releasably coupling with a plurality of pile fasteners positioned on an interior of the vest. Preferably, the pile fasteners line the neck opening associated with the bladder. It should be noted that the front and rear portions of the bladder only reside in an upper half of the vest during use. Note Figure 1. Preferably, such upper half of the vest is constructed with excess material to form a raised surface for preventing pressure from being applied to a body of user upon the inflation of the bladder.

Also included is an air actuation mechanism 42 with a mounting assembly 44 attached to the top surface of one of the front portions of the inflatable bladder and situated within the vest. The mounting assembly includes a vertically orientated threaded opening 46 in communication with the inflatable bladder. The threaded opening is thereby equipped for releasably receiving a cylindrical pressurized carbon dioxide canister 48. Note Figure 4. When attached to the threaded opening, access may be gained to the canister by way of a flap 50. Further, the bladder is preferably reinforced at the point of coupling with the mounting assembly.

A valve 52 is slidably situated above the threaded opening within a cylindrical channel 54. The valve is further equipped with a pin 54 coupled to a bottom surface thereof. Associated therewith is a spring 56 situated between the valve and the threaded opening. During operation, the valve has a first unbiased orientation wherein the pin sits distant the threaded opening. The valve further has a second biased orientation wherein the pin resides within the threaded opening for effecting the release of air from the pressurized air canister.

For controlling the orientation of the valve, a T-shaped lever 58 is pivotally attached at a central extent thereof to the mounting assembly. As such, the lever is defined by a vertical member 60 integrally coupled to a horizontal member 62. An outboard end of the horizontal member abuts a top surface of the valve. During use, the lever functions to transfer the valve to the second biased orientation upon the pivoting thereof.

Next provided is an automatic air actuator 64 including a motor 66 coupled to the mounting assembly. Eccentrically coupled to a rotor of the motor is an interconnection member 68 having an end attached to the lever. The interconnection member slidably abuts the top surface of the horizontal member of the T-shaped lever. The motor is adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly upon the actuation thereof. The automatic air actuator further includes a water switch 70 adapted to actuate the motor upon the detection of water. To prevent the inadvertent actuation of the motor, the water switch is preferably situated at the end of a small tube 72. As such, the water switch will only close when the vest is completely submerged.

Also included is a manual air actuator 74 having a pull cord 76 with a first end coupled to a second end of the vertical member of the lever of the mounting assembly and a second end extending through an aperture 78 formed in the vest. A T-shaped handle 79 is coupled to the second end of the pull cord. By this structure, the pull cord is adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly when pulled. Situated at the base of the handle is a safety pin coupled through apertures formed both in the vest and handle to prevent the inadvertent actuation of the present invention.

Finally, a manual pump 80 is included having a hemispherical shape with a planar surface mounted to one of the front portions of the inflatable bladder on a half of the front portion of vest opposite the air actuation mechanism. The manual pump serves to inflate the bladder upon the repeated depression thereof. It should be that a flap 82 is positioned over the manual pump, as shown in Figure 1. As an option, an EPIB 84 may be mounted adjacent the manual hand pump.

As to a further discussion of the manner of usage and operation of the present invention, the same should be apparent from the above description. Accordingly, no further discussion relating to the manner of usage and operation will be provided.

With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and

described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. An inflatable life vest comprising, in combination:

a vest constructed from a polyester mesh material and including a rear portion and a front portion halved by a central slit, the slit having a zipper formed thereon for allowing the selective coupling of the halves of the front portion with a lip coupled along the central slit adjacent the zipper with a pile fastener mounted thereon for releasably coupling to another pile fastener mounted on an opposite half of the front portion of the vest adjacent the central slit, the vest further comprising a collar extending upwardly from a rear portion of a neck opening formed in the vest;

a plurality of cargo pockets coupled to a lower extent of both halves of the front portion of the vest, each pocket having a lid coupled along a top edge thereof with a pile fastener situated thereon for releasably coupling with another pile fastener situated on a front face of the pocket;

an inflatable bladder comprising a rear portion with a generally rectangular configuration and a pair of front portions each with a generally square configuration, the front portions coupled along rear edges thereof to the rear portion thereby defining a neck aperture, a top surface of the bladder having pile fasteners coupled thereto for releasably coupling with a plurality of pile fasteners positioned on an interior of the vest, wherein the front and rear portions of the bladder reside in an upper half of the vest;

an air actuation mechanism including a mounting assembly attached to the top surface of one of the front portions of the inflatable bladder and situated within the vest, the mounting assembly including a threaded opening in communication with the inflatable bladder thereby equipped for releasably receiving a cylindrical pressurized air canister, a valve slidably situated above the threaded opening with a pin coupled to a bottom surface thereof and a spring situated between the valve and the threaded opening, the valve having a first unbiased orientation wherein the pin sits distant the threaded opening and a second biased orientation wherein the pin resides within the threaded opening for effecting the release of air from the pressurized air canister, the mounting assembly further including a lever pivotally attached to the mounting assembly and adapted to transfer the valve to the second biased orientation upon the pivoting thereof;

an automatic air actuator including a motor coupled to the mounting assembly and an interconnection member having a first end eccentrically coupled to the motor and a second end attached to the lever, the motor adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly upon the actuation thereof, the automatic air actuator further including a water switch adapted to actuate the motor upon the detection of water;

a manual air actuator including a pull cord having a first end coupled to the lever of the mounting assembly and a second end extending through an aperture formed in the vest with a handle coupled thereto, whereby the pull cord is adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly upon the pulling thereof; and

a manual pump having a hemispherical configuration with a planar surface mounted to one of the front portions of the inflatable bladder on a half of the front portion of vest opposite the air actuation mechanism, the manual serving inflating the bladder upon the repeated depression thereof.

2. An inflatable life vest comprising:

a vest;

an inflatable bladder situated within the vest;

an air actuation mechanism including a mounting assembly attached to a top surface of one of the front portions of the inflatable bladder and situated within the vest, the mounting assembly including a threaded opening in communication with the inflatable bladder for releasably receiving a cylindrical pressurized air canister and a valve slidably situated above the threaded opening with a pin coupled to a bottom surface thereof and a spring situated between the valve and the threaded opening, the valve having a first unbiased orientation wherein the pin sits distant the threaded opening and a second biased orientation wherein the pin resides within the threaded opening for effecting the release of air from the pressurized air canister, the mounting assembly further including a lever pivotally attached to the mounting assembly and adapted to transfer the valve to the second biased orientation upon the pivoting thereof; and

an automatic air actuator including a motor means coupled to the mounting assembly and in communication with the lever, the motor adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly upon the

actuation thereof, the automatic air actuator further including a water switch adapted to actuate the motor upon the detection of water.

3. An inflatable life vest as set forth in claim 2 and further including a manual air actuator including a pull cord having a first end coupled to the lever of the mounting assembly and a second end with a handle coupled thereto, whereby the pull cord is adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly upon the pulling thereof.

4. An inflatable life vest as set forth in claim 2 and further including a manual pump for inflating the bladder upon the repeated depression thereof.

5. An inflatable life vest as set forth in claim 2 wherein the vest is constructed from a polyester mesh material.

6. An inflatable life vest as set forth in claim 2 wherein the vest includes a rear portion and a front portion halved by a central slit.

7. An inflatable life vest as set forth in claim 6 wherein the slit has a zipper formed thereon for allowing the selective coupling of the halves of the front portion with a lip coupled along the central slit adjacent the zipper with a pile fastener mounted thereon for releasably coupling to another pile fastener mounted on an opposite half of the front portion of the vest adjacent the central slit.

8. An inflatable life vest as set forth in claim 2 wherein the vest includes a collar extending upwardly from a rear portion of a neck opening formed in the vest.

9. An inflatable life vest as set forth in claim 2 wherein the vest includes a plurality of cargo pockets coupled to a lower extent of both halves of the front portion of the vest.

10. An inflatable life vest comprising:

a vest;

an inflatable bladder situated within the vest;

an air actuation mechanism including a mounting assembly attached to a top surface of one of the front portions of the inflatable bladder and situated within the vest, the mounting assembly including a threaded opening in communication with the inflatable bladder for releasably receiving a cylindrical pressurized air canister and a valve slidably situated above the threaded opening with a pin coupled to a bottom surface thereof and a spring situated between the valve and the threaded opening, the valve having a first unbiased orientation wherein the pin sits distant the threaded opening and a second biased orientation wherein the pin resides within the threaded opening for effecting the release of air from the pressurized air canister, the mounting assembly further including a lever pivotally attached to the mounting assembly and adapted to transfer the valve to the second biased orientation upon the pivoting thereof; and

a manual air actuator including a pull cord having a first end coupled to the lever of the mounting assembly and a second end with a handle coupled thereto, whereby the pull cord is adapted to pivot the lever of the mounting assembly upon the pulling thereof.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An inflatable life vest is provided including a vest and an inflatable bladder situated therein. Next provided is an air actuation mechanism comprising a mounting assembly which includes a threaded opening in communication with the inflatable bladder. In use, the threaded opening is equipped for releasably receiving a cylindrical pressurized air canister. A valve is slidably situated above the threaded opening with a pin coupled to a bottom surface thereof. A spring is situated between the valve and the threaded opening. The valve has a first unbiased orientation wherein the pin sits distant the threaded opening and a second biased orientation wherein the pin resides within the threaded opening for effecting the release of air from the pressurized air canister. The mounting assembly further includes a lever pivotally attached to the mounting assembly and adapted to transfer the valve to the second biased orientation upon the pivoting thereof. Further provided is an automatic and manual air actuator which are both adapted to effect the pivoting of the lever.

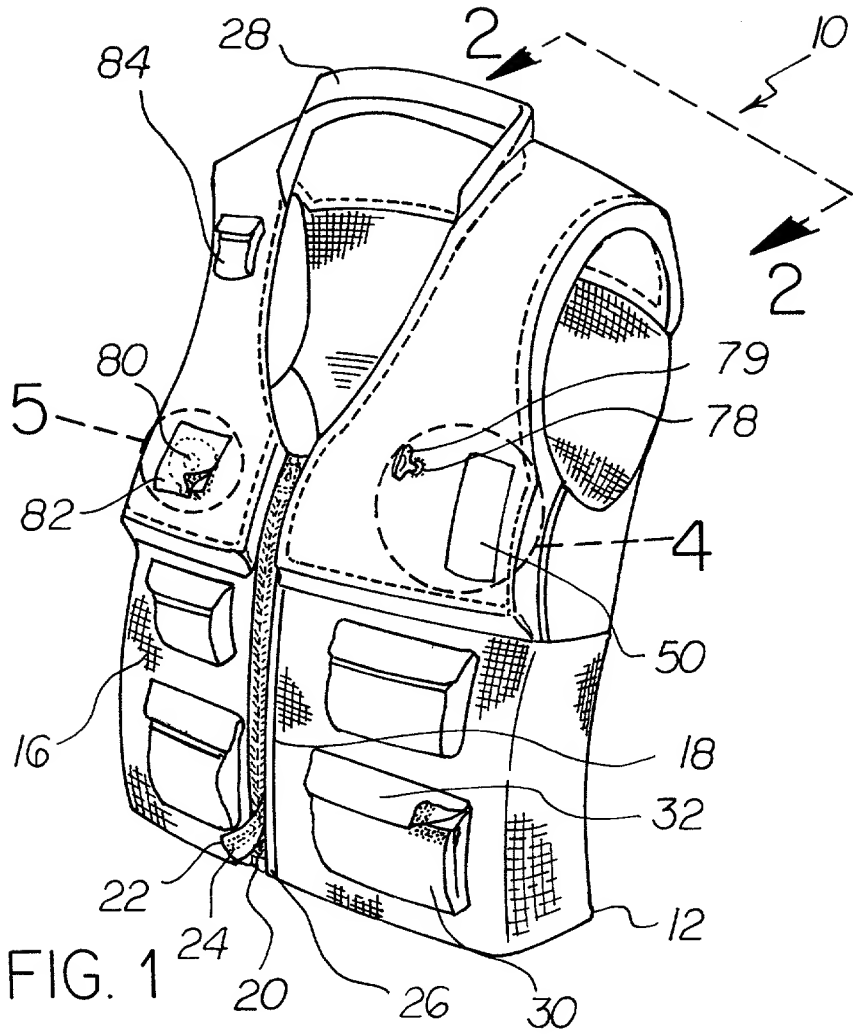
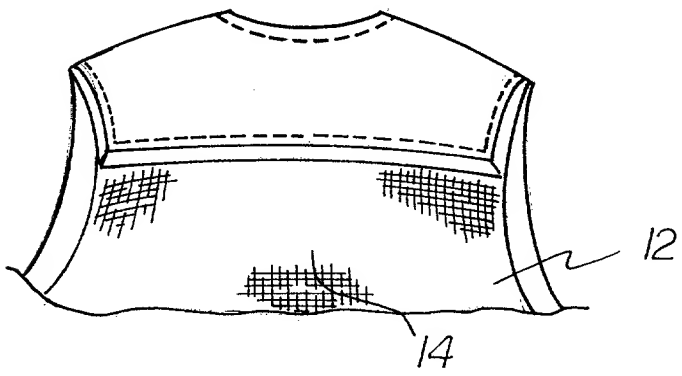


FIG. 1

FIG. 2



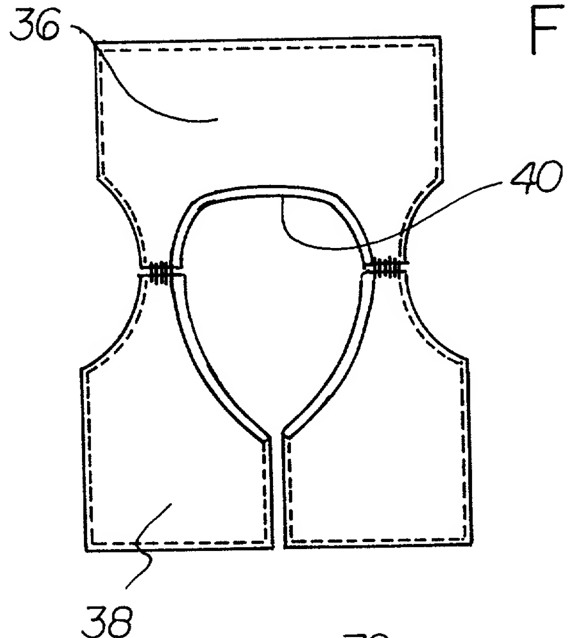


FIG. 3

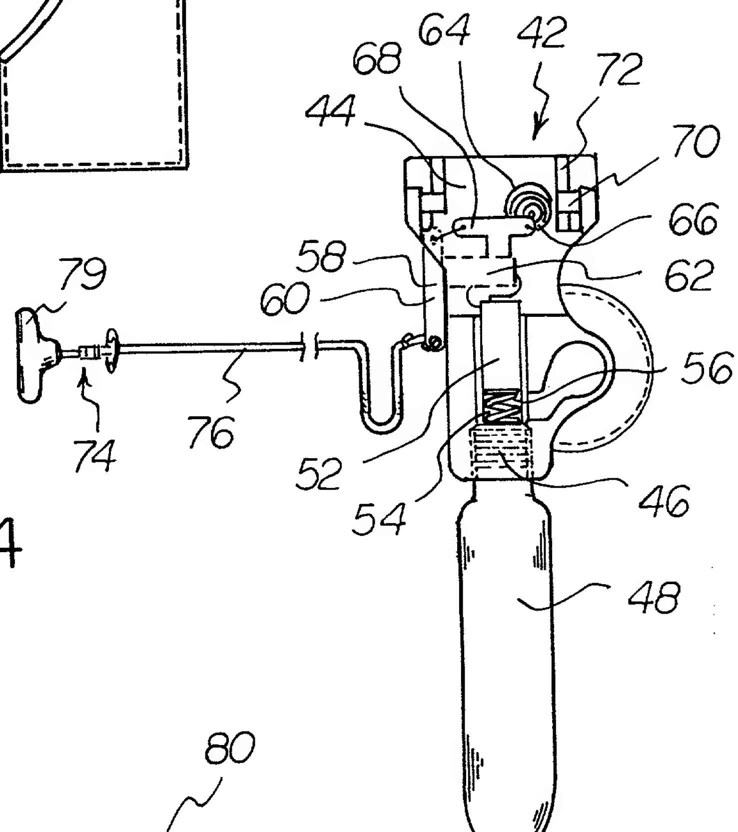


FIG. 4

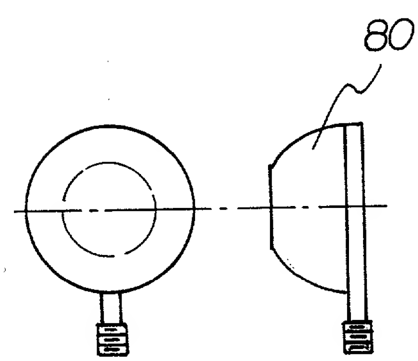


FIG. 5

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DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

INFLATABLE LIFE VEST

the specification of which is attached hereto.

I further state that I do not know and do not believe that the above-named invention has ever been known or used in the United States before my invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention thereof, or in public use or on sale in the United States more than one year prior to this application; that the invention has not been patented or made the subject of any inventor's certificate in any country foreign to the United States on any application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than six (6) months prior to this application; and that no application for patent or inventor's certificate on the invention has been filed by me or my representatives or assigns in any country foreign to the United States, except as identified below.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment if applicable.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information to the Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s)		Priority Claimed		
NONE				
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/ Year Filed)	(Yes)	(No)

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 119(e) of any United States Provisional application(s) listed below:

NONE	
(Application No.)	(Filing Date)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365 (c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, Section 112. I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

NONE		
(Application No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status - patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorneys to prosecute this application and transact all business in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: Ivar M. Kaardal, Registration Number 29,812.

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Inventor's Signature Date: 28 JULY 97

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Attorney's Docket No. K&A 97-0912
Client's Docket No. BLT317

Applicant or Patentee: **CLAUDE D. DAVIS, SR.**
DOUGLAS M. EDSALL

Serial or Patent Number:
Filed or Issued:
For: **INFLATABLE LIFE VEST**

VERIFIED STATEMENT (DECLARATION) CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS (37 CFR 1.9(f) and 1.27(b) - INDEPENDENT INVENTOR

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that I qualify as an independent inventor as defined in 37 CFR 1.9(c) for purposes of paying reduced fees under section 41(a) and (b) of Title 35, United States Code, to the Patent and Trademark Office with regard to the invention entitled as above and described in:

[X] the specification filed herewith.
[ ] application serial number _____, filed _____.
[ ] patent no. _____, issued _____.

I have not assigned, granted, conveyed or licensed and am under no obligation under contract or law to assign, grant, convey or license, any rights in the invention to any person who could not be classified as an independent inventor under 37 CFR 1.9(c) if that person had made the invention, or to any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d) or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e).

Each person, concern or organization to which I have assigned, granted, conveyed, or licensed or am under obligation under contract or law to assign, grant, convey, or license any rights in the invention is listed below:

[X] no such person, concern, or organization
[ ] persons, concerns or organizations listed below*

*NOTE: Separate verified statements are required from each named person, concern or organization having rights to the invention averring to their status as small entities. (37 CFR 1.27)

FULL NAME: NOT APPLICABLE
ADDRESS: NOT APPLICABLE

[ ] INDIVIDUAL
[ ] SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN
[ ] NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate (37CFR 1.28(b)).

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application, any patent issuing thereon, or any patent to which this verified statement is directed.

NAME OF INVENTOR: **CLAUDE D. DAVIS, SR.**

Inventor's Signature

Date: 28 July 97

NAME OF INVENTOR: **DOUGLAS M. EDSALL**

Inventor's Signature

Date: 28 JULY 97